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SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [HR](#) [IR](#) [IS](#)

SUBJECT: IRANIAN DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER TO VISIT CROATIA

Classified By: Peter D'Amico, Pol Off, Reasons 1.4 (B/D)

¶1. (C) Petar Mihatov, MFA State Secretary Bozinovic's Chief of Staff, informed Pol Off on November 27 that Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister (DFM) for European Affairs Mahdi Safari was scheduled to visit Zagreb on December 15 and 16. DFM Safari had meetings set up with President Mesic and State Secretary Bozinovic. Pol Off urged the GoC not to see the DFM. Mihatov replied that the MFA had already reached a decision to go ahead with the meetings. He added that the MFA would raise concerns about Iran's nuclear program and the GoI's anti-Semitic statements, particularly on the holocaust. Pol Off also highlighted that Iran was on the USG list of states that sponsor terrorism. In response, the Mihatov said the MFA would also consider mentioning its objections to the GoI's role in sponsoring terrorism as well.

¶2. (SBU) In a conversation on December 3 the Ambassador raised his concerns about the visit of the Iranian DFM with Mesic Foreign Policy Advisor Budimir Loncar. In response, Loncar said that Croatia believes in being open to dialogue with all countries, including Iran. However, he acknowledged that it would be important for President Mesic to make clear in the meeting with the DFM that Iran needed to cooperate fully with the IAEA and carry out its obligations under UN Security Council resolutions. Loncar also said Mesic would reiterate Croatia's position that threats to the existence of a UN member state, such as Israel, were unacceptable, and that the problems of the Middle East and Iraq could only be resolved through peaceful means.

Comment  
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¶3. (C) We have discussed the Iranian visit with the Israeli ambassador here, who has also raised the issue with Mesic's staff. The Israeli Ambassador's view, which we share, is that there is no prospect of convincing the Croats to cancel the visit. Our combined diplomatic efforts should instead focus, as they already have, on stiffening the message that the Croats will send to the Iranians.  
BRADTKE